

FACT SHEET



Former Diller Battery Site Des Moines, Iowa

October 1999

INTRODUCTION

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to address contamination at the Former Diller Battery site, 701 Corning Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa. This fact sheet provides an update of site activities.

SITE BACKGROUND

The site is located in a commercial area of north-central Des Moines and is bordered by a residential neighborhood to the north, light industry to the east and south, and Riverview Park Lake to the west. The Diller Battery Company operated a lead-battery factory from 1946 to 1952 on the southernmost part of the site. In 1953, the facility was operated jointly by Diller Battery and Span-O-Life Battery, and by Span-O-Life Battery only in 1954. From 1955 to 1964, the Hunter Manufacturing Company manufactured beds at the site. This part of the site, which includes a small metal storage shed and a concrete pad, was fenced in 1997 by the city of Des Moines. Another part of the site, located northeast of the former Diller Battery Company property at the southwest corner of 6th Avenue and Boston Avenue, was previously the location of a school. The school was demolished in 1994. Fill dirt may have been moved from the Diller Battery property onto the cleared lot.

In 1995, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources collected soil samples at the site after the city of Des Moines notified them of potential contamination. Elevated levels of lead were found in the soil. EPA collected soil samples in June 1996 and found elevated levels of lead, arsenic, and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's).

In 1997, the city of Des Moines and the Union Pacific Railroad Company, two of the owners of the site, signed an agreement, known as an Administrative Order on Consent, to assess the contamination at the site and identify alternatives to address the contamination. Polk County also agreed to contribute money toward costs associated with the site assessment.

SITE ASSESSMENT

The city of Des Moines and the Union Pacific Railroad took additional soil samples in May 1999 to assess the extent of the contamination. The samples indicate that elevated levels of lead are

present within the fenced part of the site where the battery factory was located. Arsenic was detected at elevated levels across portions of the site. Elevated PAH's were found over the entire surface area of the site. The source of the arsenic and PAH's is unclear.

NEXT STEPS

Now that the extent of the contamination has been assessed, the next step is to identify alternatives to address the contamination. The city of Des Moines and the Union Pacific Railroad will evaluate alternatives to address the contamination at the site and submit them to EPA. EPA will evaluate these alternatives and make a recommendation to address the contamination. The public will have an opportunity to comment on EPA's recommendation before a final decision is made. EPA also plans to have a meeting in Des Moines to discuss the recommendation with the public. We expect to make our recommendation by Spring 2000.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information regarding this site, please contact:

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